

Torrance Herald

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TORRANCE NOTES

Mr. and Mrs. W. Colsen of Huntington Park were Sunday visitors at the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Bradford of Amella street.

Weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Phillips of Anapola avenue were Mr. and Mrs. Gus Finch and Mr. and Mrs. Earl Sheilar, of Los Angeles.

Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Dexter of Los Angeles were entertained Sunday by Mr. and Mrs. E. N. Tomkins of Gramercy avenue.

Mr. and Mrs. Marion Reeve of Cabrillo avenue visited friends at Huntington Park Sunday.

Miss Ruth Boice, student nurse at the Angellus Hospital, spent Sunday with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Boice, of Cabrillo avenue.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Zeller, here recently from Pennant, Saskatchewan, have taken apartments at Redondo Beach for the winter.

Miss Marion Wright spent the weekend with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Wright, of Cota avenue.

Mrs. J. M. Higgins of Arlington avenue was entertained over the weekend by Mrs. Ivy Arnold of Compton.

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The SKELETON FINGER by Headon Hall



BEGIN HERE TODAY

SIR DUDLEY GLENISTER, suspected of the murder of his cousin, George Glenister, to obtain his title and estate, goes into a rage when—

KATHLEEN GLENISTER, sister of the dead man, refuses to marry him. She loves—

CAPTAIN NORMAN SLATER, who breaks into the room and engages Sir Dudley in a fight, until—

JAMES WRAGGE, Scotland Yard detective, arrives. He obtains some valuable evidence from Kathleen.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY "Thank you, madam, on the whole I think I'd better not," replied the detective in a tone of self-negation.

"Trickey mightn't like it. Besides, I can find him all right—the old blighter."

"So long then." "Miss Blair" re-entred into the narrow entrance. "Look in any time you're passing."

Wragge promised to do so and got into the waiting taxi. And as he drove away he assured himself that he would certainly have to re-visit this abode at no distant date.

For Mrs. Simon Trickey had not only been revealed as "Maud Blair," the cinema actress, but without any manner of doubt she was also the original of the photograph which Kathleen Glenister, not an hour ago, had identified as that of Sally Grimes, the daughter of the head gamekeeper at Beechwood Grange.

CHAPTER X The Entry in the Case-Book ON the evening after his return to Harley Street Doctor Willoughby Melville, having finished his solitary dinner, retired to his consulting room.

Switching on the electric, he unlocked an antique corner cupboard and ran his eye over several neatly piled stacks of books in a uniform binding which bespoke them as manuscript. Taking down one of the volumes he carried it to a deep-seated easy-chair and began to turn the pages.

"About five years ago," he murmured.

His meeting with Inspector Wragge at the lodge gates of Beechwood Grange on the previous day had struck a chord of memory awakening the liveliest curiosity.

He had already become obsessed with the mystery of the skeleton finger, and when he recognized the ascetic looking clergyman loitering there as a Scotland Yard officer whom he had treated professionally years before, he at once guessed that he was engaged on the case.

Ignoring the clerical disguise, he had given Wragge the surprise of his life by addressing him by name and recalling their old relations as medical adviser and patient.

Immediately afterwards he had made amends by assuming that the inspector was on duty there and informing him that a shady-looking individual had just forced himself upon Sir Dudley Glenister.

He found the entry—his system of cross-indexing was the last word in method—without any trouble, and he seemed deterred to peruse it. His first glance at the length of the entry told him that the state of Inspector Wragge's nerves five years ago had demanded careful attention.

He read his own diagnosis of the symptoms with a revived interest that recalled the examination to which he had submitted Mr. Wragge.

"James Wragge, Inspector Criminal Investigation Department," the page was headed. "Age 43, height 5 ft. 10 in., weight 12 stone. No traces of organic disease. Appearance and pulse indicate temperate habits."

The specialist paused in his reading and in his mind's eye visualized the bogus clergyman whom he had met at the lodge gates of Beechwood Grange.

"And if," he reflected, "I had to diagnose Mr. Wragge over again I should probably have to use precisely the same words I used five years ago. He looks as fit as ever, and, barring a few gray hairs, not a day older. But there was a look of mental strain about his eyes."

Melville read on: "When I pressed him for the cause of what I was compelled to describe as a nervous breakdown which threatened creeping paralysis, his frank demeanor disappeared. He prevaricated and fenced with my questions till I was obliged to tell him that unless I was informed of the source of worry I could do but little to remove it."

Placing his finger between the leaves, the doctor leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes. The scene in that consulting room, now so long ago, came back to him as though it were yesterday. The hard-bitten detective officer, pressed for the cause of his trouble, had burst into tears, confessing that he had been caught by a high official, holding a mid post in the government of the day, accepting a bribe for allowing a defaulting banker to escape from justice.

The official accuser, whom Wragge had not named, had consented to hush the matter up, while giving him to understand that it was only held in abeyance. If at any future time the delinquent misbehaved himself, the old misconduct would be brought up.

CHAPTER XI Number 16 Lipscombe Road

KATHLEEN turned a deaf ear to Norman Slater's plea that he should accompany her to Simon Trickey's house in Brixton.

Trickey was evidently a drink-sodden reprobate, formidable possibly as a crafty rascal where money was concerned, but not the sort of ruffian who would use methods of violence.

So it was that Kathleen drove to Brixton without escort, to be set down in front of the garish little villa in the middle of the afternoon. Telling the taxi driver to wait, she rang the bell and was admitted by the smart maid without the opposition encountered by Wragge on the previous day.

She was shown into a tawdry sitting-room to the right of the narrow entrance passage, and it was not



until the servant had closed the door on her that she awoke to the fact that she had neither been asked nor given her name.

The fumes of a strong cigar had assailed her nostrils on entering the house, and she concluded that Mr. Trickey had observed her arrival from the room on the other side of the passage and that he would join her presently.

She only hoped that he would be sober. But five minutes passed, and neither drunk nor sober did Mr. Simon Trickey or anyone else appear. Another five minutes passed and the door opened to admit the fatted lady who had parleyed with Wragge from the doorstep the previous day. Recognition was mutual and instantaneous.

"Sally Grimes!" exclaimed Kathleen.

"Miss Maud Blair" advanced a tentative hand ready, but dropped when no responsive sign of it being grasped was shown.

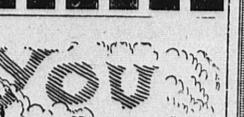
"Do sit down, Miss Glenister," she simpered. "My husband told me he was expecting a lady on business, but who would have dreamed that it would be you!"

Bewildered, and with a sense of physical nausea she could not account for, Kathleen sank into a gauzy plush-covered chair.

"Mr. Trickey is your husband?" she gasped.

"Yes, I am quite an old married woman," was the giggled reply. "Though I daresay they have another tale to tell me of at Beechwood, Miss Glenister."

Kathleen ignored the brazen suggestion.



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gestion. "Nothing but the local gossip that you were married reached me," she replied coldly. "I have not been much at Beechwood lately."

"But you were there when the crow flew over the shooting lunch," the lady of the house insinuated slyly.

"That is a matter I cannot discuss with you," said Kathleen. "Is it likely to be long before I can see your husband?"

"He will be in directly. I left him in the dining room with— with a man who's rather difficult to get rid of. You don't show much interest, Miss Glenister, in my present circumstances. You would be surprised to hear that I am the chief breadwinner in this humble abode—Miss Maud Blair, if you please, of the films."

Kathleen had the haziest idea of what the woman was talking about, but she made a few polite inquiries which more than enlightened her as to the nature of "Miss Blair's" occupation and the fame she had won thereby. And then a sudden intuition told her that her hostess was not only talking from vanity but to gain time—and that all the time she was listening intently.

Kathleen listened, too, and she was almost instantly rewarded by two sounds in quick succession. The first was the swish of a silk petticoat in the passage and the second was the furtive opening and shutting of the front door. Kathleen was sitting too far back in the room to obtain a full view of the person leaving the house, but she caught a glimpse of a purple cigarette—a singular ornament if worn by "the man" with whom, according to his wife, Mr. Simon Trickey had been engaged on the other side of the passage.

(To Be Continued)

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